

Resolution 20-7 Testimony

MISC. COM. 5

EMLA

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2020 9:19 PM
Subject: Executive Matters & Legal Affairs Speaker Registration/Testimony
Attachments: 20200116211849_Resolution_20-7_Testimony.docx

Speaker Registration/Testimony

Name	Jun Shin
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Email	junshinbusiness729@gmail.com
Meeting Date	01-21-2020
Council/PH Committee	ExecutiveMatters
Agenda Item	RESOLUTION 20-7
Your position on the matter	Oppose
Representing	Self
Organization	
Do you wish to speak at the hearing? Yes	
Written Testimony	
Testimony Attachment	20200116211849_Resolution_20-7_Testimony.docx
Accept Terms and Agreement	1

20JAN17 PM 8:03 CITY CLERK

IP: 192.168.200.67

COMMITTEE ON EXECUTIVE MATTERS & LEGAL AFFAIRS

Honolulu City Council

January 21, 2020, 1:00 PM

TESTIMONY IN STRONG OPPOSITION OF RESOLUTION 20-7

Relating to President Syngman Rhee Day

Aloha Chair Menor, Vice Chair Fukunaga, Members of the Honolulu City Council Committee on Executive Matters & Legal Affairs

My name is Jun Shin. I am testifying in my individual capacity as a resident of Council District 5. I am in **strong opposition** to Resolution 20-7, Relating to President Syngman Rhee Day, which would proclaim February 3, 2020 as President Syngman Rhee Day for the City and County of Honolulu.

At the surface, President Rhee may appear to be an individual with roots to Hawai'i that we should officially acknowledge. Educated at Harvard and Princeton, a leader in the Korean community here in Hawai'i, a leader in the Korean Independence Movement, and first President of South Korea. However, this is not the case. Although pre-presidency Syngman Rhee needs to be scrutinized, Syngman Rhee was effectively a self-serving strongman with dictatorial tendencies during his presidency. There are tons of examples of President Rhee's legacy as a self-serving strongman including the persecution and murders of thousands and thousands of his political opponents and blowing up the Hangang Bridge out of Seoul (South Korean Capital), killing those fleeing from North Korean forces during the onset of the Korean War while lying to Seoul residents that he would stand with them despite already fleeing further South himself.

However, I wanted to address the part of the resolution that notes that, "Dr. Rhee resigned from the South Korean presidency on April 27, 1960, and returned to Hawaii where he lived until his death at age 90 on July 19, 1965." This is an incomplete picture. Why did Syngman Rhee resign and come to Hawai'i once more? This is because the South Korean people rose up in April (This is referred to as the "April Revolution") against him. President Rhee was desperately clinging onto political power through fraudulent elections, murdering student protestors, and forcing democratic institutions to undemocratically bend the rules for him. He fled to Hawai'i to escape any form of accountability. This should not be celebrated at all.

As the son of Korean immigrants, the history of Korea is a part of my own personal history, it is a part of who I am. This may just be a nonbinding resolution, but I don't want a revised version of that history to remain in our official records as the truth. How about a day to educate and commemorate the April Revolution instead? Taking an opportunity to learn from Korean democracy to improve our own. Please use your votes to **oppose** Resolution 20-7.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,

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Honolulu, HI 96814
Cell: 808-255-6663
Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

P.S. Respectfully, here are sources for further information and sources to enhance and back up my personal testimony:

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/south-korea-owns-up-to-brutal-past>
<https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation>
https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/03/362_113597.html
https://www.ekoreajournal.net/issue/view_pop.htm?Idx=3213

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Friday, January 17, 2020 12:03 AM
Subject: Executive Matters & Legal Affairs Speaker Registration/Testimony

Speaker Registration/Testimony

Name Dylan Ramos
Phone 8085516999
Email dylanpk.ramos@gmail.com
Meeting Date 01-21-2020
Council/PH Committee ExecutiveMatters
Agenda Item RES20-7
Your position on the matter Oppose
Representing Self
Organization
Do you wish to speak at the hearing? No

Aloha Chair Menor and respected Committee Members,

With all due respect, I find it ridiculous that this resolution even exists, let alone that it must be commented on. I cannot think of a single sensible reason why the Vice Chair or my district's own City Councilwoman, Ms. Kobayashi, would find it appropriate for this Council to consider such a tone-deaf resolution. It's one thing to remember our history, but it is another thing entirely to commemorate a controversial foreign dictator whose government was responsible for political repression and such atrocities as the killing of thousands of participants in the Jeju Uprising and dozens more in the 1949 Mungyeong massacre.

Written Testimony

The text of this resolution conveniently skips from Syngman Rhee's first election to his resignation, and makes no mention of his controversial past. As a historian, I do not enjoy drawing false equivalencies, nor do I like making definitive statements about political history. But for the sake of this argument, I'd ask if it'd be appropriate for this Council to designate a day commemorating WWII-era Stalin, or perhaps WWII-era Mao if they had spent time in Hawaii? These examples may seem radical, but the point is that all these figures have their supporters, even at times including Americans, but that doesn't mean they deserve commemoration.

Lastly, I must ask, what good does this resolution do for the City or this country? Because I know for a fact not all Koreans in Honolulu approve, and our state's commitment to better trans-Pacific relations is betrayed by this resolution introduced during the tenure of South

Korean President Moon Jae-in.

For all the above reasons and more, I ask that this Committee reject this resolution and reaffirm the Council's support of democratic ideals rather than brutal authoritarian perversions of said values.

Mahalo,
Dylan Ramos
District 5 (96816)

Testimony
Attachment

Accept Terms
and Agreement 1

IP: 192.168.200.67